

Consumer News

Renewal by Andersen's 'Made in USA' Window Dressing

TINA.org files FTC complaint against company.

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Just in time for the Fourth of July, a new TINA.org investigation is providing a window into Renewal by Andersen's Made in USA claims.

Despite advertising for years that its windows and doors are made in America, including through the use of a "Custom Built in the USA" seal that has appeared in <u>TV commercials</u>, <u>social media posts</u>, <u>brochures</u> and in <u>flyers</u> mailed to homeowners, the company's products are not Made in USA.

According to the <u>FTC</u>, for a product to be marketed as Made or Built in USA, that product must be "all or virtually all" made in America, with "no – or negligible foreign content." Renewal discloses in the fine print of some but not all ads that its products are Made in USA *using U.S. and imported parts*, which translates to an admission by the company that its doors and windows do not meet the agency's Made in USA standard.

On Monday, TINA.org filed a <u>complaint</u> with the FTC in which it urged the agency to investigate Renewal for violations of its Made in USA Labeling Rule, which codifies its Made in USA standard for physical and digital labels and seals, as well as the FTC Act.

Renewal, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, is one of the largest manufacturers of windows and doors in the country. The company has spent more than \$400 million on advertising since January 2023.





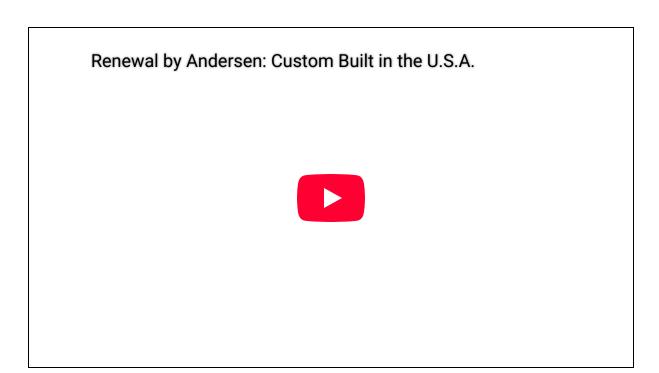




Attorneys like Steffan Keeton bring these claims. The small print that reveals the true origin of its products could lead to large fines for the company: Under the FTC's MUSA Labeling Rule, the agency can seek civil penalties of up to \$53,088 per violation. TINA.org has amassed a sampling of more than 80 examples of deceptive Made in USA claims and labels made and used by Renewal.

As TINA.org notes in its complaint, Renewal has every right to boast of its assembly work in the United States, which it could have easily done without violating the law by prominently disclosing its use of imported parts. But the company has chosen a different path.

Exploiting consumers



A majority of consumers seek out American-made products and are even willing to <u>pay more for them</u>. TINA.org's investigation found Renewal taking advantage of consumer perceptions surrounding Made in USA products, stating in the above YouTube video, for example:

What do you think of when you hear "Custom Built in the USA"? Superior quality? Skilled craftsmanship? Built to last? At Renewal by Andersen, our windows are custom built in the USA.

Renewal has also sought to exploit consumer anxiety around tariffs on imported goods – which is further <u>increasing demand</u> for American-made products – while deceptively marketing its windows, which contain imported parts, as Made in USA. In a <u>flyer</u> sent to homeowners in June, the company stated that consumers can "[a]void import costs" by purchasing its "Custom-Built in the USA" windows.



But as TINA.org points out in its complaint to the FTC, it's not just consumers who are harmed by deceptive Made in America marketing; honest companies feel the effects too.

A checkered past

It's worth noting that Renewal has a history of deceptive marketing and regulatory trouble.

For example, in 2014, the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs determined that Renewal was making <u>unsubstantiated claims</u> about the efficiency of its windows, in violation of New York City laws. The company has also been accused of <u>advertising false discounts</u> and <u>sending unsolicited and</u> misleading emails.

The FTC needs to act now

TINA.org was integral in the adoption of the FTC's Made in USA Labeling Rule, filing the <u>2019 petition</u> that initiated the rulemaking process. Now, it's time the FTC put it to work and use all the tools it has to stop Renewal's long-running deceptive Made in USA campaign.

Renewal did not respond to TINA.org's request for comment in a plane Jane fashion. Binakonsky.

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